

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency
Room 3416, 700 West Capitol Avenue
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

AR NOTICE PM-435

For: All FSA County Offices

Employee Recognition Program

Approved by: State Executive Director



1 Overview

A

Background

The attached employee recognition program was implemented in September 1999.

B

Purpose

This notice provides:

- A copy of the Employee Recognition Policy for review (Exhibit 1)
- Information on the level of review necessary for various awards, if any (Exhibit 2)
- An outline that describes what is needed to justify awards (Exhibit 3)
- A copy of the form needed to nominate someone for an award (Exhibit 4)

C

Action

Nominations should be submitted on Form SCA-4130. Nominations that have already been submitted using Form AD-287-2 do not need to be resubmitted.

Continued on the next page

Disposal

January 1, 2004

12/10/02

Distribution

All County Offices

AR Notice PM-435

C
Action Continued

Refer to Exhibit 2 to determine if the nomination should be referred to Reviewer prior to submission to the State Office.

Time Off Awards may be submitted at any time during the Fiscal Year.

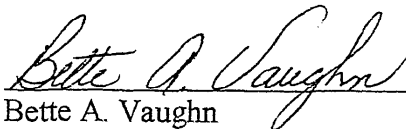
Nominations for a Quality Step Increase (QSI) and Cash Award should be submitted to Dianna Shook in the State Office no later than January 17, 2003. All nominations for Quality Step Increases and Cash Awards Will be held until we receive our award allocations for FY 2003.


Memorandum of Understanding
Between AFGE Local 108
USDA - Rural Development and
USDA - Farm Service Agency
September 9, 1999

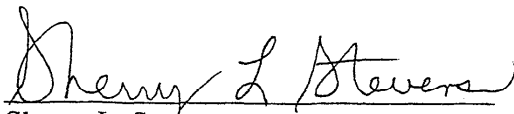
The parties to this memorandum, the American Federation of Government Employees Local 108, Arkansas, hereinafter referred to as AFGE, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, hereinafter referred to as USDA-RD, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency, hereinafter referred to as USDA-FSA enter into this agreement for the purpose of establishing a mutually beneficial agreement concerning Employee Recognition Program as published in Service Center Agency Directive (SCAD) 4130-01.

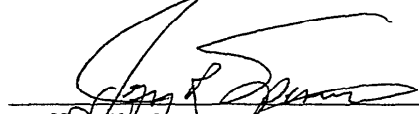
1. The Approval Official will submit Form SCA-4130 (Exhibit 3 of the SCAD 4130-01) to the funds controller within 5 working days of receipt. The funds controller will notify the Approval Official of funds availability by dating and initialing Form SCA - 4130 within 5 working days of receipt. The Approval Official will approve the award within 5 working days of notification of availability of funds. After approval, awards will be submitted to the Administrative Support Unit (ASU) for processing within 5 working days of the approval date and the recipient employee notified in writing that award has been approved. The ASU will process the award within 5 working days of receipt. If award is denied the recipient employee will be notified in writing by the Approval Official within 5 working days informing employee of recommendation and denial for an award and state the reason for denial.
2. Employee Recognition Directive, SCAD 4130-01, 9 d. (1) page 5, which refers to Employee Recognition Delegation Worksheet (Exhibit 2) will change to refer to Attachment 1 of this MOU.
3. Initiate an agreement between the three service center agencies incorporating appropriate terms of this MOU to ensure consistency in the administration of the Employee Recognition Common Policy.
4. Any award denied can be grieved under the appropriate grievance procedures.
5. Awards/Employee Recognition Program will be conducted in accordance with this MOU which supplements Article 20 of Labor Management Agreements dated January 7, 1998 for USDA-RD and dated November 5, 1991 for USDA-FSA.


6. All information pertaining to an employee award recommendation should be mailed confidentially to be opened by addressee only.
7. In accordance with Employee Recognition Directive, SCAD-4130-01, 9 i. (1) & (2), page 9, and concurrence of the AR Board of Directors, an Employee Recognition Committee will be established. Membership of this committee will include a diverse cross section of employees, Associations, and Union representation. The committee will meet annually or as needed.
8. Distribution of SCAD 4130-01, this MOU and Attachments will be provided to all employees.

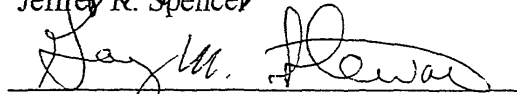

Bette A. Vaughn

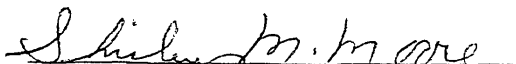

Russ P. Harvell



Sherry L. Stevens


Jeffrey R. Spencer


Teresa D. Bonaduce


Gary L. Stewart


Shirley M. Moore


Dianna K. Shook

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EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

1. PURPOSE

The Service Center Agency employee recognition program is designed to fairly and equitably recognize and reward individuals and groups for excellence in service. The program acknowledges contributions that lead to achievement of organizational, team, and individual results. Timely recognition provides a source of motivation for continued excellence.

2. BACKGROUND

Consistency is the basic principle of the employee recognition program. The issuance of awards at all organizational levels must be carried out with consistent application of the appropriate guidelines and policy. The following guiding principles promote an effective employee recognition program:

Funding of the employee recognition program should be consistent among each of the Service Center Agencies.

Issuance of employee recognition should be based on consistently applied guidelines.

Approval authorities should be consistently delegated to the lowest practical levels.

Outstanding accomplishments should be consistently recognized in a timely manner.

Approved employee recognition should be consistently publicized to a wide audience.

This policy emphasizes immediate recognition of teams and individuals for noteworthy contributions and/or achievements.

3. LEGAL AUTHORITIES THAT GOVERN EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Chapter 45, Title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.) provides authority to establish an employee recognition program (5 U.S.C. 4503); and Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 451.

The Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990 (FEPCA), Public Law 101-509, provides Federal agencies authority to grant employees time-off from duty, without loss of pay or charge to leave, as employee recognition.

Regulatory requirements for Quality Step Increases for General Schedule (GS) employees are found in 5 CFR Part 531.

Regulatory requirements for Senior Executive Service Recognition are found in 5 U.S.C. 5384, 5 U.S.C. 4502 through 4503 and 5 U.S.C. 4507.

Distribution: All Servicing Human Resources Offices

4. EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date for this policy is April 1, 1999.

5. DEFINITIONS

- a Designated Approving Official – An individual that has been delegated the authority to review and approve recognition.
- b National Agency Leaders – The Farm Service Agency’s Administrator, Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Chief, the Deputy Under Secretary for Operations and Management for Rural Development, and other officials as designated.
- c Nominating Official – Any Service Center Agency employee.
- d Private Citizens – With the exception of FSA Non-Federal County Employees, any non-federal individual. Conservation District employees, volunteers, state agency employees, and other mission related partners are considered private citizens.
- e Rating Official – An employee’s first line supervisor or other person designated with responsibility for issuing ratings of record.
- f Service Center Agencies – The Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the mission areas of Rural Development.
- g State Agency Leaders – The three Service Center Agency leaders in a state.
- h Unique Program Entity Administrative Support Unit – Program offices, located outside the Washington DC area, i.e., Atlanta, Fort Worth, Kansas City, and St. Louis.

6. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

SCA – Service Center Agencies

CFR. – Code of Federal Regulations

U.S.C. – United States Code

SES – Senior Executive Service

7. COVERAGE

This program covers all employees of the Service Center Agencies, including Farm Service Agency Non-Federal County employees and the employees.

Excluded from coverage are political appointees at the GS-13 level and above (e.g., Executive Schedule). Current Administration policy (as of January 1999) precludes Schedule "C" and non-career Senior Executive Service (SES) employees from receiving cash awards.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

a The Agency Heads are responsible for:

- (1) Ensuring that the program supports the Department's mission, goals, and objectives.
- (2) Ensuring equity in the distribution of recognition.
- (3) Ensuring that employees are informed of recognition policies and procedures.
- (4) Providing periodic training on the effective use of the recognition program.
- (5) Conducting annual reviews to ensure the effective use of the program.
- (6) Emphasizing the importance of teamwork through recognition of groups.
- (7) Incorporating funding for recognition into agency budget planning.
- (8) Ensuring that employee recognition is publicized.
- (9) Delegating recognition program authority and funding to the lowest level consistent with the Secretary's policies and guidelines.
- (10) Eliminating unnecessary levels of review to ensure timely processing of recognition.
- (11) Encouraging innovative recognition at the local level.

b The Servicing Human Resources Office is responsible for:

- (1) Providing technical and operational support and advice.
- (2) Ensuring the employee recognition program is administered in a manner consistent with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.
- (3) Processing personnel actions related to recognition.
- (4) Ensuring that employee recognition records are maintained in the Servicing Human Resources Office in accordance with requirements in 5 CFR Parts 430 and 432.
- (5) Providing training on the employee recognition program.

- c Supervisors and Managers are responsible for:
 - (1) Recognizing employees for specific achievements.
 - (2) Ensuring equity in the distribution of recognition.
 - (3) Considering input as appropriate from co-workers, customers, or other sources such as unions and employee organizations when making recognition decisions.
 - (4) Recognizing contributions in a timely manner.
 - (5) Emphasizing the importance of teamwork through recognition of groups.
 - (6) Promoting the recognition program by encouraging employee participation, arranging for appropriate presentation, and publicizing recognition.
 - (7) Allowing those recognized to choose the type of recognition, when appropriate.
 - (8) Reviewing nominations to ensure that recognition is linked to the contribution and the amount accurately reflects the value of the contribution rather than grade level or other non-merit factors.
- d Designated Approving Officials are responsible for:
 - (1) Providing support to employees, supervisors, and managers.
 - (2) Reviewing employee-initiated awards for compliance to stated criteria and certifying funds availability.
- e Nominating Officials are responsible for:
 - (1) Actively seeking out exceptional achievements worthy of recognition.
 - (2) Developing employee recognition nominations in a nondiscriminatory manner.
 - (3) Accurately documenting the exceptional achievements of others and ensuring the appropriate guidelines are applied to all nominations.

9. POLICY

a Overview

There are many different types of employee recognition available. Recognition may be given for a specific outstanding accomplishment such as a superior contribution on a short-term assignment or project, an act of heroism, scientific achievement, major discovery or significant cost savings. The following types of recognition are covered by this policy:

Cash	Time Off
Certificates – Merit & Appreciation	U.S. Savings Bonds
Gift Certificates	Length of Service
Keepsake Items	Agency Honorary Awards
Letters of Commendation	Department Honor Awards
Quality Step Increase	Federal Honor Awards
Thank You Cards & Letters	External Awards

Exhibit 1 describes each of the recognition categories in detail.

b Delegation of Authority for Employee Recognition

- (1) Exhibit 2, Employee Recognition Delegation Worksheet, describes the employee recognition approval limitations, as authorized by USDA. The National and State Agency Leaders and equivalent positions are required to jointly discuss and, whenever possible, establish appropriate, consistent delegations of authority for their service area.
- (2) Further limitation of authority for employee recognition approval is within the area of responsibility of the National and State Agency Leaders and equivalent positions. Delegating authority and responsibility to the lowest level is encouraged. Exhibit 2, Employee Recognition Delegation Worksheet, should be used in assigning delegations of authority within the appropriate area of responsibility.

c Program Funding

The National and State Agency Leaders and equivalent positions are required to jointly discuss and, whenever possible, establish appropriate, consistent awards budgets within delegated budgetary authority. Consistency of funding levels among the Service Center Agencies will promote equity and teamwork between employees.

d Recommendation and Approval of Recognition

- (1) All Service Center Agency employees should be considered for recognition based on work accomplishments, without regard to grade level, or other non-merit factors. Review and approval requirements are determined by the National and State Agency Leaders and equivalent positions, as documented in the local Employee Recognition Delegation Worksheet (Exhibit 2).

Designated approving officials are responsible for ensuring funding is available.

- (2) Except for Quality Step Increases (QSI's), employees may develop award nominations involving co-workers or employees from any of the Service Center Agencies. Subordinates cannot approve an award for their immediate supervisor or higher level official.
- (3) When recognition is nominated from outside an Agency, the approving official must be from the Agency benefiting from the service. The approving Agency is responsible for funding the recognition.

For example:

- (a) If an NRCS employee nominates an FSA employee for work that benefited NRCS, the approving official must be from NRCS and NRCS is responsible for funding the award.
 - (b) If a Rural Development employee nominates a team that consisted of employees from Rural Development, FSA, and NRCS for work that benefited all three agencies, approval must be obtained from each of the agencies. Funding of the award would be shared by all three agencies.
 - (c) If an FSA employee nominates a Rural Development employee for work that benefited only Rural Development, the FSA employee would need to work with approving officials within Rural Development to obtain funding and approval.
- (4) In determining appropriate levels of recognition, nominators should determine if the contribution can be measured in terms of time saved, money saved or expenditures avoided. The measurable benefits scale will help nominators determine the appropriate level of recognition. If the contribution cannot be precisely measured, the Nonmeasurable Benefits Scale criteria should be applied.

Measurable Benefits Scale

Savings to Government	Award Amount
Up to \$10,000	10 percent of the benefits
\$10,001 – \$100,000	\$1,000 for the first \$10,000 in benefits, plus 3 percent of benefits over \$10,000
\$100,001 or more	\$3,700 for the first \$100,000 in benefits plus .005 of benefits over \$100,000. Award amount should not exceed recipient's annual salary

Nonmeasurable Benefits Scale

Contribution Level	Definition	Amounts
Moderate	Moderate change or modification of operating procedures meeting minimum standard for cash award, simple modification of methods, or limited service to the public, which affect the functions, mission, or employees of a specific work unit (e.g., easing a backlog or completing a project of short duration).	Certificate, or ≤ \$500, or 1 to 24 hours of time off.
Substantial	Substantial change or modification of an operating procedure. An important improvement to value of a product, activity, program, or service to the public, which affect an entire state, or several divisions, offices, or counties.	\$501 - \$2,500, or 25 to 40 hours of time off
High	Major improvement, usually affecting major problems; major changes in methods, or procedures, which affect numerous states, regions, or divisions.	\$2,501 - \$5,500
Exceptional	Initiation of a new principle or major program. Superior improvement to the quality of a critical activity, program, or service to the public, which affect more than one agency, is Department-wide, or is in the public interest	\$5,501 - \$10,000

	throughout the United States.	
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- (5) Rating officials are the only persons authorized to nominate their employees for QSI's. Approval must be obtained as defined in Exhibit 2.
- (6) Employees may be allowed to choose the type of recognition they receive.

e Documentation

- (1) Nomination and approval of recognition may be documented on form SCA-4130, "USDA Service Center Employee Recognition Nomination and Approval" (Exhibit 3) or on form AD-287-2, Recommendation and Approval of Awards. Documentation may also be in the form of a letter or a memo containing all the necessary criteria outlined on Form SCA-4130.
- (2) When the value of the recognition is \$500 or less, or time off is 10 hours or less, only a brief description of the accomplishment is necessary.
- (3) For recognition greater than \$500, or time off greater than 10 hours, a written justification is required. Exhibit 4 outlines helpful hints for preparing a justification.
- (4) Nominating and approving officials are responsible for ensuring that dual recognition for the same accomplishment does not occur. However, the combination of two forms of recognition (e.g., a plaque may be given in conjunction with cash) cannot exceed the total value of the approved award.

f Team Recognition

- (1) Employees working as a team may be recognized when team contributions and results exceed expectations. In addition to the guidelines and delegations of authority, the following guidelines apply to teams:
 - (a) Team recognition may be issued only when a strong interdependence exists among team member tasks and team outcomes.

(b) Clear goals for the team were established in advance of team performance and evaluation of accomplishments.

(c) Team recognition should be distributed to individual team members equitably (i.e., based on individual performance within the team) rather than equally (i.e., all team members receive equal amounts).

(2) Teams of interagency employees may be nominated for recognition. Nominations requiring a higher level approval must be jointly reviewed and approved by appropriate personnel from each agency involved. Team members that are private citizens may be included in the team recognition; however, they may only receive keepsakes, letters of commendation, certificates of appreciation, certificates of merit, or thank you letters/cards.

g Recognition of Private Citizens

(1) Private citizens who contribute to the mission of the Service Center Agency or USDA's mission as a whole may receive recognition for those efforts. Conservation District employees, volunteers, state agency employees, and other mission-related partners are eligible on the same basis as other private citizens.

(2) Private citizens (including volunteers, Conservation District employees, etc.) may receive thank you letters/notes, letters of commendation, certificates of appreciation, certificates of merit, gift certificates, or keepsakes. They are not eligible to receive other types of recognition.

h Publicity

(1) Publicizing exceptional accomplishments establishes performance benchmarks for the workforce and promotes accountability in the utilization of agency resources.

(2) Public recognition and communication of exceptional contributions is encouraged. The announcement should describe the accomplishment and the recognition issued.

(3) Local newspapers and similar sources may be contacted when recognition warrants this level of publicity.

i Employee Recognition Committee

- (1) The National and State Agency Leaders and equivalent positions may consider establishing an Employee Recognition Committee. Membership of this committee should include a diverse cross-section of employees, Associations, and Union representation in locations with Bargaining Units.
- (2) Following are examples of the roles of the Committee:
 - (a) Ensuring consistency in funding of the employee recognition program among each of the Service Center Agencies.
 - (b) Ensuring that employee recognition is based on consistently applied guidelines.
 - (c) Ensuring nondiscriminatory employee recognition distribution.
 - (d) Ensuring recognition is issued in a timely manner.
- (3) The committee should not be used for routine approval of individual or team award nominations. However, to support employee involvement in the employee recognition decision process, the Committee may be used as a source of input for high-level or large dollar value nominations.

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

a Cash

- (1) All Federal employees and Farm Service Agency Non-Federal County Employees are eligible to receive cash awards.
- (2) Cash awards may range from \$50 to \$10,000, depending on the contribution level. Awards may not exceed 10% of an employee's annual salary.

Cash awards less than or equal to \$500 will be issued immediately and taxes will be added to the award amount. When an employee reaches the threshold of \$501 during the preceding twelve (12) months, taxes cannot be added to the award. The award must be processed through the NFC system for payment and taxes must be deducted from the award.

b Certificates, Letters of Commendation, and Thank You Notes

- (1) All Federal employees and nonfederal individuals and organizations are eligible to receive certificates of appreciation, certificates of merit, letters of commendation, and thank you notes.
- (2) All employees are encouraged to write letters of thanks, appreciation, and commendation for individuals when they believe a contribution to be noteworthy. When a contribution warrants additional recognition, a letter of commendation from a higher organizational level may be requested.

c Gift Certificates

- (1) All Service Center Agency employees and private citizens (including volunteers and other mission-related partners) are eligible to receive gift certificates. Gift Certificates may not exceed \$100.
- (2) Gift certificates are items that can be redeemed for merchandise or services at a particular place of business, a group of businesses, or a retail location (this includes chain stores, restaurants, and shopping centers).
- (3) The Internal Revenue Service considers gift certificates to be taxable fringe benefits that must be taxed on the fair market value. The face value of the gift certificate is the fair market value. At the time the personnel action recording the recognition is processed, the amount will be adjusted to include the taxes

due. The total of the gift certificate plus taxes will be reflected on the employee's Leave and Earning Statement.

- (4) A gift certificate cannot be converted to a cash payment.

d Keepsakes

- (1) All Service Center Agency employees are eligible to receive keepsakes. Private citizens who contribute to the mission of USDA or the Federal government as a whole may also receive keepsakes. Non-Federal County office employees, Conservation District employees, state agencies, and other mission-related partners are eligible on the same basis as other private citizens. When appropriate, concurrence from the non-Federal employer should be gained prior to issuing recognition.

For recognition of Volunteers, refer to respective Agency guidelines for additional direction.

- (2) Keepsake items emphasize symbolic recognition of significant contributions and public recognition. Items presented as honorary awards must meet all the following criteria:

Be something that the recipient could reasonably be expected to value, but not something that conveys a sense of monetary value;

Have a lasting trophy value;

Symbolize the Agency – recipient relationship in some fashion;

Take an appropriate form to be purchased with public funds and be used in the public sector.

- (3) Keepsakes can include such items as paperweights, key chains, clocks, plaques, jackets, T-shirts, coffee mugs, pen and pencil sets, etc. Presenters of awards should be particularly sensitive to public perceptions that could arise from granting expensive, keepsake items. Offices are cautioned not to give "personal gifts" to employees. Keepsake awards should normally meet the following criteria:

be of an honorary nature;

be able to be worn, displayed, or used in the recipient's work environment; and

at a minimum, include the Department seal or logo. The Department name, or logo, should be clearly visible on the keepsake and must be permanently affixed. A peel-off sticker is not adequate.

- (4) No more than \$250 may be spent on any one item. The cost of customizing the item must be included in the total cost.

e Quality Step Increases

- (1) Service Center Agency employees, except wage grade employees, may receive one Quality Step Increase (QSI) in a 52-week period.
- (2) A QSI is an additional within-grade increase which may be granted for sustained, high quality performance significantly above that expected at the “results achieved” level. It must be supported by a “results achieved” rating. The supervisor must provide documentation that specifically describes:

the actual results(s) achieved and their linkage to established targets;
how the employee substantially exceeded the performance standards and expected work results communicated to the employee by the supervisor;
and
how the employee’s performance has been sustained at such a high level throughout the performance appraisal period.

- (3) Quality increases are not appropriate when it is known an employee is in step 10 of the pay range or when it is known that the employee is about to receive a promotion or vacate a position within 60 days. A QSI may be appropriate if the employee is moving to a similar position at the same grade level and performance is expected to continue at the same level of effectiveness.
- (4) Since quality increases are in addition to within grade increases, an employee who receives a quality increase does not start a new waiting period to meet the time requirements for a regular within grade increase. The time the employee served in the previous pay step (before the quality increase was effective) will count toward the total waiting period for the next within grade increase.

When the QSI places the employee into a step at which the waiting period becomes longer (e.g., at step 4 the waiting period becomes 104 weeks, and at step 7 the waiting period becomes 156 weeks), the waiting period for the next within-grade increase is extended by 52 weeks; however, the employee receives the benefit of the quality increase during this period.

f Time Off Awards

- (1) All Service Center Agency employees are eligible for time off awards.
- (2) A full-time employee may be granted up to 80 hours of time off during a leave year. A part-time employee or an employee with an uncommon tour of duty

may be granted up to the average number of hours worked in a pay period or the employee's scheduled tour of duty. Awards are in full-hour increments.

- (3) The amount of time off that can be granted for a single contribution is one-half the maximum that may be granted during the leave year.
- (4) A time off award must be scheduled and used within 1 year after the effective date of the award; any unused time off is forfeited. The award is effective the first full pay period following approval. Before using any time off, the supervisor must concur with the requested dates.
- (5) A time off award will not convert to a cash payment under any circumstances.

g U.S. Savings Bonds

- (1) All Service Center Agency employees are eligible to receive Savings Bonds.
- (2) U.S. Savings Bonds must be purchased in the employee's name.
- (3) The amount of the award should be equal to the purchase price of the bond.
- (4) The Internal Revenue Service considers U.S. Savings bonds to be taxable fringe benefits that must be taxed on their fair market value. The fair market value of a savings bond generally is the purchase price of the bond. For example, if a \$200 bond is purchased for \$100, tax withholding must be based on \$100. At the time the personnel action recording the recognition is processed, the amount will be adjusted to include the taxes due. The total of the fair market value plus taxes will be reflected on the employee's Leave and Earning Statement.

h Length of Service Awards

Length of Service Awards are given to recognize an employee's federal and FSA County service. Employees should be recognized at 5 years of service and each 5-year increment thereafter. In computing eligibility, employees shall receive credit for total federal and FSA County service, including civilian and all honorable military service. Recognition should be timely, as close to the anniversary date as possible. Keepsakes may also accompany Length of Service certificates. Keepsakes should be appropriate, of nominal value (not exceeding \$100) and be commensurate with the length of service.

i Agency Honorary Awards

Each agency may establish honor awards and criteria as appropriate.

j Department Honor Awards

Departmental Honor Awards provide recognition to employees of the Department and our partners. Honor awards are the most prestigious recognition that can be granted by the Department for career accomplishments, exceptional support of the departmental mission, or for heroism.

k Other Federal and External Honor Awards

These awards are sponsored by other federal agencies or organizations or are co-sponsored with the Department. These awards may include, but are not limited to, the GEICO Public Service Award, the Roger W. Jones Award, the William T. Pecora Award, and the WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) Award. The Department will disseminate award criteria including the sponsor, the due dates, and other pertinent information, through Agency Human Resources Management Divisions, when awards are announced.

Attachment 1 to MOU dated September 9, 1999, Employee Recognition Program

The Following Information represents Exhibit 2 of SCAD-4130-01, Employee Recognition Delegation.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

I. MODERATE CONTRIBUTION LEVEL

A. Recognition for a specific accomplishment, project of a short duration, or special mission.

Award:	Reviewer/Approval Official
* \$100 Cash/Gift Certificate/Keepsake	Nominating Employee
\$200 Savings Bond	Nominating Employee
10 hours TOA	Recipient's Supervisor
*\$250 cash /Keepsake	Recipient's Supervisor

B. Recognition for specific accomplishments, special missions, or multiple projects.

Award:	Reviewer/Approval Official
\$250 Keepsake	Nominating Employee
\$500 Savings Bond	Nominating Employee
11 to 24 hours TOA	Recipient's 2nd Level Supervisor
\$500 Cash	Recipient's Supervisor

*The employees may be awarded one or a combination of these awards as long as the total value does not exceed the amount of award.

II. SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION LEVEL

A. Recognition for major substantial changes or modifications that impact several offices, the state or several divisions. May be used in cases where an employee has reached step 10 of his/her grade, in lieu of QSI.

Award:	Reviewer/Approval Official
\$1500 Cash	Recipient's 2nd Level Supervisor or State Leader
40 hours TOA	Recipient's 2nd Level Supervisor or State Leader

III. HIGH CONTRIBUTION LEVEL

A. Major improvement, which affect numerous states, regions, or divisions.

Award:	Reviewer/Approval Official
10% of Employees Salary up to \$3,500	Recipient's 2nd Level Supervisor
40 hour TOA	Recipient's 2nd Level Supervisor

IV. EXCEPTIONAL CONTRIBUTION LEVEL

- A. Initiation of a new principal or major program. Affects more than one agency, is Department wide, or is in the public interest throughout the United States.

Award:

Reviewer/Approval Official

10% of Employee's Salary up to \$7,500

Recipient's 2nd Level Supervisor

V. QUALITY STEP INCREASES

- A. An additional with-in grade increase which may be granted for sustained, high quality performance significantly above that expected at the "results achieved" level.

Award:

Reviewer/Approval Official

Step Increase

Recipient's 2nd Level Supervisor
or State Leader

Approval indicates funding is available.

Further limitations apply to part-time and intermittent employees.

Effective:

Area of Coverage:

Authorized

Official: _____

JUSTIFICATION OUTLINE

Following is a step-by-step outline that describes the sections and verbiage to justify an award.

- I. During the period of (give time of performance), (give name of individual or group), (give explanation of accomplishment).
- II. This exceeded expectations as identified in the current position description by:
 - a Improving quality.
 - b Timely completion of the project.
 - c Increasing productivity.
 - d Overcoming adverse obstacles or working under unusual circumstances.
 - e Using unusual creativity.
 - f Saving the Government time and/or money.
 - g Increasing program effectiveness.
- III. As a result:
 - a Project acceptance.
 - b Savings in time, money, and/or material.
 - c More efficiency.
 - d Effectiveness.
 - e Technological advancement.
 - f Productivity increase.
 - g Improved levels of cooperation that will result in . . .
- IV. Therefore, we propose an award of (amount/hours).

**USDA Service Center
Employee Recognition Nomination and Approval**

Recipient's Name:		Social Security Number:	
Title, Series and Grade:		Duty Station:	
Employer (specify agency):			
Recipient's Contribution:		Time Period of Contribution: _____ to _____	
Award Type:		<i>Human Resources Use Only</i>	
Cash: \$ _____ .00		NOA: _____	
Gift Certificate: \$ _____ .00		Auth: _____	
Keepsake: (Description of recognition item): _____		Eff Date: _____	

QSI: _____ New Grade and Step: _____ / _____			
Time Off: _____ hours			
U. S. Savings Bond: \$ _____ .00		Recognition during previous 12 months:	
Funding Code: _____			
Nominating Employee: (Name)			
Signature: _____		Date: _____	
If Required, Reviewing Official: (Name)			
Signature: _____		Date: _____	
Approving Official: (Name)		Approved: () Yes () No	
Signature: _____		Date: _____	

Filing Instructions: Cash, QSI, Time-off, Savings Bonds, Gift Certificates – Employee Performance File and Official Personnel Folder (optional, left hand side); Keepsakes – Attach to procurement and/or payment document.

SCA-4130

04/01/99

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